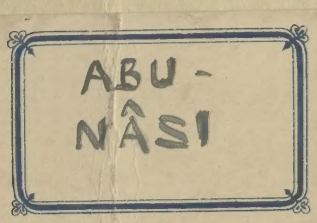
Insertion to
RCM MS 4784

The ~~Red~~ Blue Cloak



G. Calderon,
~~Heathland Lodge,~~
~~Hampstead Heath,~~
~~N.W.~~
42 Well Walk
Hampstead.

A B U - N Â S I.

A wordless Comedy.

C H A R A C T E R S.

THE SHEIKH	About 40, pompous, bearded.
ZILLAH	His wife, 20, lithe and sly and dainty.
SHEMSEDDÎN	Her lover, 20, slender, romantically beautiful.
MEFROOR	A real Negro, childlike, big, wide-eyed.
FATIMA	Zillah's confidential slave, played by a man resolute and grotesque.
PASHA	40, a dignified Arab.
ABU-NÂSI	A young donkey.
2 MAMELUKES	Waiting on the Sheikh, servile men, with stooping necks.
FOUR ODALISQUES	Waiting on Zillah.
THE PASHA'S LIEUTENANT	
TWO LICTORS	Waiting on the Pasha, tall and terrible.

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ABU-NÂSI.

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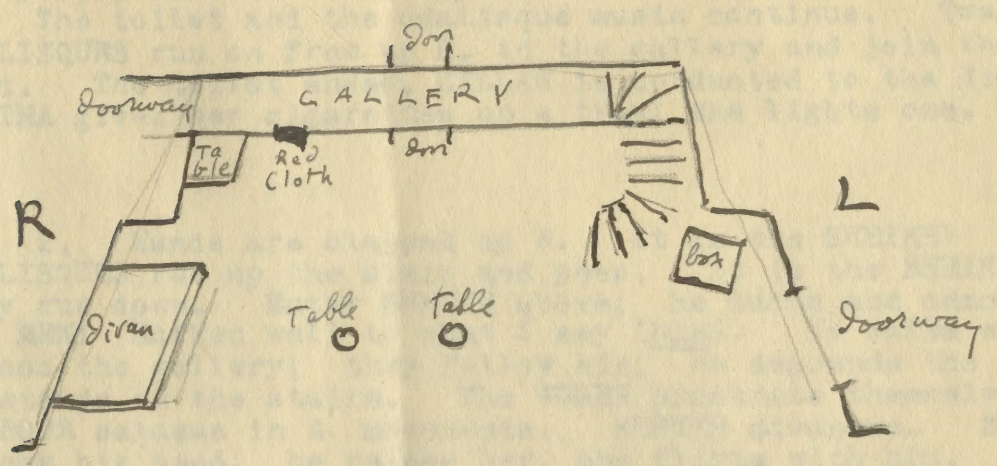
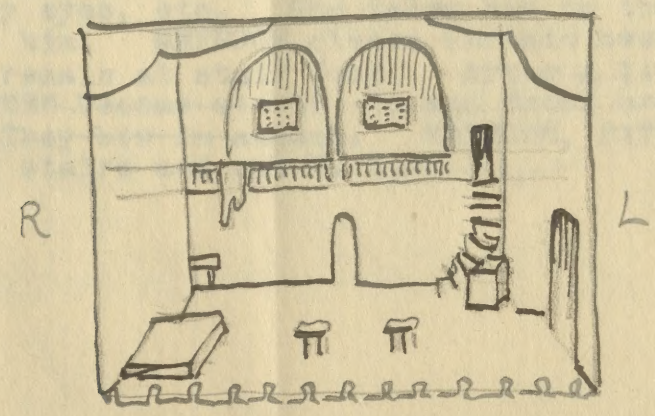
THE SCENE. In the Sheikh's harem, a white stone hall, gallery behind; entrance from inner rooms along the gallery R. to L. and down a bending staircase through the wall. Door C. to a Court or Garden. Door L. through an Anteroom to the street. A divan down R.; ~~a big box somewhere L.~~ The red cloth hangs over gallery balustrade up R. Two little low tables C.

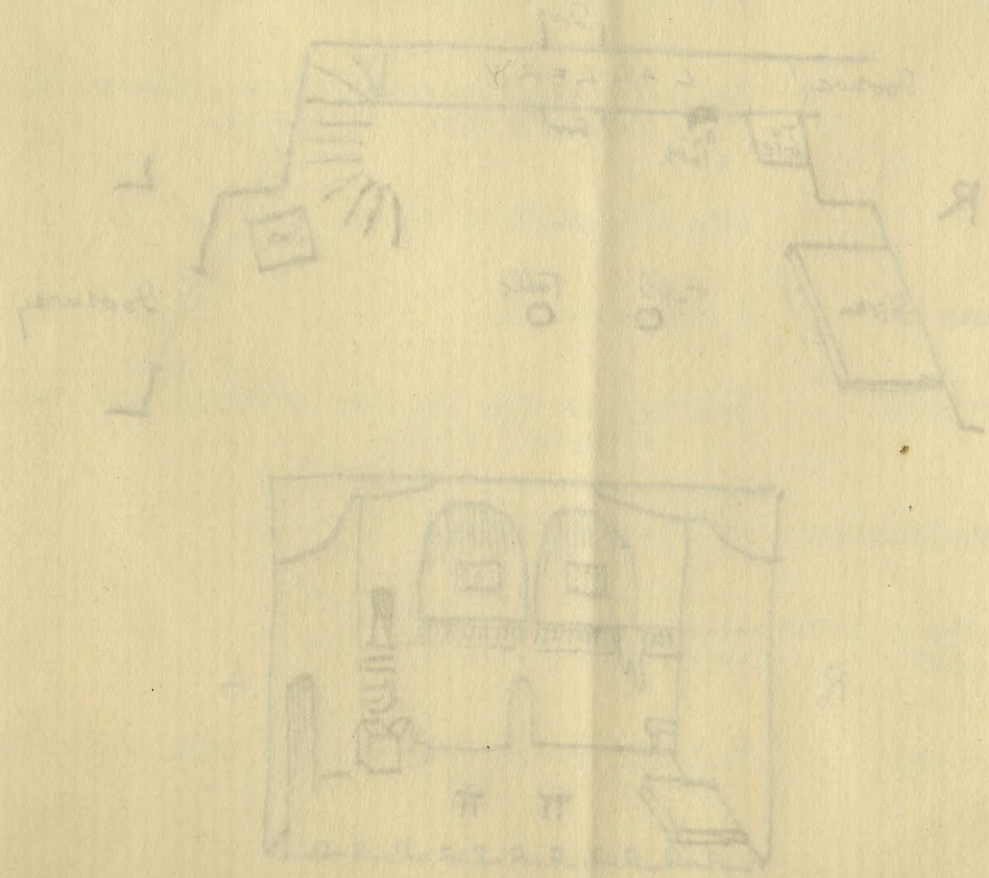




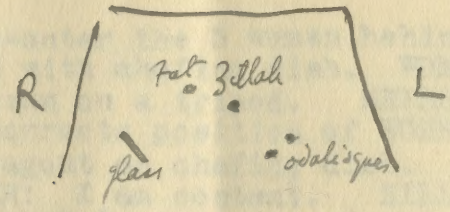
ASU-NASI.

A Worldess Comedy.

THE SCENE. In the Sheikh's harem, a white stone hall, gallery behind, entrance from inner rooms along the gallery R. to L. and down a banding staircase through the wall. Door C. to a court or garden. Door L. through an Antroom to the street. A divan down R., a big-box somewhere L. The red cloth hangs over gallery balustrade up R. Two little low tables C.



1. ZILLAH on cushions C. by a pierglass. FATIMA completes her toilet, paints her eyes; two ODALISQUES sit and play music to her.



MEFROOR enters barefooted up R. with a mop, folds and rehangs the red cloth, dusts the pillar, crosses gallery and descends stair. He salaams to ZILLAH, making 4 movements, lifting dust and touching breast, lips and forehead. He dusts and tidies. The ODALISQUES laugh at him. "What a silly man he is!" He moves a table, they remove it, he readjusts it. "What a silly man he is!" He picks up a speck of dust from the floor, carries it slowly and throws it out at the door L. The toilet and the odalisque music continue. Two ODALISQUES run on from up R. in the gallery and join the rest. The toilet ended, ZILLAH is conducted to the divan; FATIMA gives her cigarettes on a tray; she lights one.

2. Hands are clapped up R. It is the SHEIKH! Two ODALISQUES run up the stair and peep. It is the SHEIKH! They run down. Enter SHEIKH above; he turns and admonishes his MEN: Harken well to what I say (bis:). He walks slowly across the gallery; they follow him; he descends the stairs. He stands on the stairs. The WOMEN prostrate themselves. MEFROOR salaams in 4 movements. SHEIKH advances. ZILLAH kisses his hand; he raises her, she flirts with him. Oh light of my eyes, etc. She takes him to the divan; she blandishes him. MEFROOR closes curtain over door C. MAMELUKES remain at stair foot. ~~After a little ZILLAH claps hands; WOMEN become alert: Go and fetch breakfast for your Master. They bow in assent.~~ MEFROOR, FATIMA, 4 ODALISQUES run out up stairs and out R. to get breakfast

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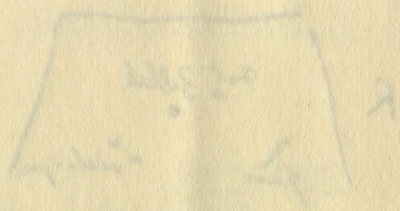


MEFROOR enters barefooted up R. with a mop, folds and replaces the red cloth, dusts the pillar, crosses gallery and descends stair. He salaams to ZULLAH, making 4 movements, lifting dust and touching breast, lips and forehead. He dusts and tidies. The ODALISQUES laugh at him. "What a silly man he is!" He moves a table, they remove it, he readjusts it. "What a silly man he is!" He picks up a speck of dust from the floor, carries it slowly and throws it out at the door L. The toilet and the odaliques music continue. Two ODALISQUES run on from up R. in the gallery and join the rest. The toilet ended, ZULLAH is conducted to the divan, FATIMA gives her cigarettes on a tray, she lights one.

2. Bands are clapped up R. It is the SHEIKH! Two ODALISQUES run up the stair and peep. It is the SHEIKH! They run down. Enter SHEIKH above. He turns and admonishes his KEEN: Harken well to what I say (bis). He walks slowly across the gallery, they follow him, he descends the stairs. He stands on the stairs. The WOMEN prostrate themselves. MEFROOR salaams in 4 movements. SHEIKH advances. ZULLAH kisses his hand, he raises her, she flirts with him. Oh light of my eyes, etc. She takes him to the divan, she blandishes him. MEFROOR closes curtain over door C. MAMOUDES remain at stair foot. After a little ZULLAH claps hands, WOMEN become alert: Go and fetch breakfast for your master. They bow in assent. MEFROOR, FATIMA, 4 ODALISQUES run out up stairs and out R.

3. ZILLAH: Oh light of my eyes, etc. SHEIKH: I want to smoke. ZILLAH: I will fetch your hookah. She fetches hookah from up R. (ground floor) and lights it. He expresses satisfaction.

4

4. Re-enter the 5 women behind each other with dishes, MEFROOR last with chafing dish. WOMEN lay dishes in semi-circle by divan on a tripod. MEFROOR plants tripod L., incidentally corrects position of WOMEN'S dishes and returns to prepare ragout on chafing dish. ZILLAH: Now let me feed you. SHEIKH: I am content. ZILLAH feeds him. SHEIKH: (indicating NEGRO) And what is this? MEFROOR: A ragout, my master; such a dish it will be (kissing his fingers) as you never tasted in your life. Continues preparation. A DONKEY wanders on C. WOMEN (joyful): Abu Nâsi! Abu Nâsi! Honour and glory to Abu Nâsi! His bells jingle. They surround him and talk to him. SHEIKH: Come hither Abu Nâsi. SHEIKH feeds it from his hand. ZILLAH embraces it. SHEIKH laughs: I shall be jealous. She kisses SHEIKH. The ODALISQUES take ABU NÂSI out. 1·40

5·40

5. MEFROOR: The dish is ready! Prepare for savoury feeding. SHEIKH eats: suddenly he is angry; a bad taste. Villain! He tries again: it is worse. Very angry. MEFROOR, surprised, pleads for mercy. SHEIKH growls; NEGRO trembles. ODALISQUES bring ewer, bowl, towel and rosewater perfumes. They wash and wipe his hands. The taste recurs; growls. ~~A trumpet sounds a~~ signal in the street. SHEIKH: Harken, the signal! I must go. The MAMELUKES advance, bringing scimitar and cloak. ZILLAH: Oh melancholy! woe! Then we must part! She takes cloak and scimitar, arrays SHEIKH C. SHEIKH kisses her; bad taste recurs; growls; MEFROOR trembles. Farewell. WOMEN kneel. Melancholy of WOMEN, pompous exit of SHEIKH, followed by two MAMELUKES. WIFE and FATIMA follow him with their eyes out L. 2·20

~~2·40~~
8·0

6. WOMEN dance gaily. FATIMA has a grotesque dance, mocking the SHEIKH. MEFROOR shakes his head over the ragout; he thinks of the bad taste; he cannot understand. ZILLAH feels pangs of love for SHEMSEDDIN. ~~FATIMA and ZILLAH conspire: MEF: is in the way. FAT. has an idea;~~

Simultaneous with end part of 6 (Dance) Odal: Dance and sell negro

8.0

~~She calls two ODALISQUES and bids them remove~~ the NEGRO. ZIL. sits. Two cajole MEF. He is flattered; he and they pick up dishes and go out flirting and laughing together by stair and gallery.

7. ZIL. romantic and coy. FAT. urges her to action. Where is the red cloth? They search everywhere. Suddenly, FAT.: Behold it! pointing to gallery rail. She runs up and ~~fetches it.~~ Romance recurs. FAT: Be bold! ZIL: I will! She runs up into gallery, looks cautiously about, opens window and waves red cloth.* She returns and sits on divan. WOMEN adorn her with flowers and perfume her. 2

10

13.30

8. ZIL: I hear him coming! FAT: He is there! FAT. lifts curtain C. SHEMSEDDIN leaps in and strikes an attitude. Behold me, Zillah, I am here! SHEM. and ZIL. exchange eloquent speeches with passionate gestures. †34 A conversation; a duet; bulbuls, lotus flowers, weary hours of waiting, etc. ZIL: Come, let us eat! She sets SHEM. on cushion at table C. She kisses the red cloth and spreads it on table. FAT. and two ODALS. bring fruit and cakes from up R. (ground floor) ZIL. and SHEM. eat. Two ODALS. dance a Nautch dance. ~~FAT. burlesques them.~~ SHEM. compares the grapes to her eyes, and the wine to his blood. ZIL. calls for a guitar; she improvises eloquently and hands it to SHEM. He hesitates and finds inspiration at last and she is delighted. (Bis.) They embrace and raise wine cups. He begins a flowery speech, about the moon and palmtrees. He is interrupted by FAT., who is on the watch. The SHEIKH is coming! One last kiss! FAT: Begone, begone! Call me when all is safe: wave from the window. ZIL: I will, I will. FAT: Begone, begone! Exit SHEM. gracefully C. kissing his hand. 4.30

14.30

5

18.30

9. FAT. squats with guitar and makes burlesque doleful music; ZIL. and ODALS. crouch sadly with her.

10. Enter SHEIKH L., supported by two MAMS. Horror! What has happened? My beloved husband! I am ill, very ill:

* Shem. must already have [illegible] signal of R. Odalk waved at the window.

I have a stomach-ache. Tragic despair of WOMEN; cries of lamentation in the band rouse the rest of the household. MEF. and two ODALS. run in by gallery. HUSBAND recounts, it was the ragout, the bad taste, that villain MEF. Dismay of MEF: Oh beloved master, is it possible! MAMS. exeunt by gallery. SHEIKH is supported to divan; they rub his stomach and condole; they feel his pulse; they look at his tongue. He suffers. MEF. is miserable. ZIL: Let us set our wits to cure him; let us get all the remedies we can. Each suggests a different remedy, MEF., FAT. and ODALS. FAT. claps her hands; they all run off in the gallery. ZIL. and SHEIKH: duet of pain and sympathy. SLAVES all run on again, carrying remedies, each recommending his own. SHEIKH refuses them all testily; he only wants to sleep. ZIL: To sleep. ALL: To sleep. They pile up cushions about him and cover him with a drapery. They pat the pillows. Lullaby. WOMEN, sotto voce: Let us dress and go out and leave him alone. FAT. dives grotesquely into big box, throwing draperies into the air. They veil and array ZIL. and themselves. Lullaby; snores. WOMEN enjoin silence on each other, with fingers to lips; they go out L., two trailing their shoes, the rest on tiptoe. 1.20

11. MEF. goes about on tiptoe; arranges the folds of the curtains; puts everything straight. He removes the fruit, wine, etc. from the table C. and puts it on a table up R. (ground floor). He carefully gathers the red cloth together; picks up three crumbs that had fallen over; tiptoes up the stairs (stopping to look back at sleeping SHEIKH) opens the window and shakes the cloth out of it. Taking it back, he sees a crumb sticking to it, loosens it with his finger and shakes it out of window again, folds it, lays it over his arm and exit up R.

24 3.45 / 18.16

12. SHEIKH alone, sleeping. Curtain over door C. shakes, and SHEM. pokes his head cautiously in. Seeing no-one, he enters. Passionate gestures. ZILLAH is mine once more; she called me; I saw her signal with the red cloth from that window. But where is she? Ha! on yonder divan. Oh joy! Oh Zillah! This is yet more than I had hoped for. SHEM. kneels afar with longing gestures. He kneels beside

the divan, with outstretched arms and cries boldly: Oh Zillah, I am here! A pause. SHEIKH stirs. Oh Zillah, I am here! SHEIKH looks slowly round, blinking; then raises head. A pause. They stare. LOVER paralysed with fear; SHEIKH puzzled. At last he understands; wrath grows. He sits up; SHEM. retreats slowly. SHEIKH puts his legs on floor. Then advances slowly with long strides on retreating SHEM. The chase grows faster. They go round and round the room; they knock over tables. SHEM. gets on divan and throws cushion at the SHEIKH. He dodges behind the box and in doing so lifts the lid. SHEIKH throws him in and locks it. SHEIKH sits on box with folded arms, alternately meditating vengeance and rubbing his stomach. Bangs from within box. At last the SHEIKH makes up his mind to appeal to the PASHA, to convict ZIL. of infidelity. He claps his hands; enter MAMS. in gallery. SHEIKH bids them fall in behind him. He draws his scimitar, rages, calls on the gods and exit maniacally L. MAMS. exchange look, indicate that he is mad and follow him with servile calm.

3.15

22.0

27

lays cloth over banister (alt)

13. MEF. enters on tiptoe in the gallery; looks down, is startled by the disorder; moves on; looks down again; scratches his head; comes down. Where is the Master? Gone. Looks out C.; not there. Looks out L.; not there. Then what can it mean? And so untidy too! Picks up a cushion; hears knocking in the box. He drops cushion, looks about for the noise. Shakes his head. Picks up cushion; same business. Picks up 4 or 5 cushions; knocking. Drops them all and starts back with outstretched finger. It's there in the box: Allah save us all! It's the devil! (indicating horns) Renewed knocking. He bolts up the stairs. Looks round, stops in the stair doorway. Loud knocking. With long strides he runs out along the gallery R. A moment later his head comes round the gallery end; knocking; he disappears.

14. Frantic knocks; getting fainter. SHEM. is getting gradually stifled.

15. Enter ZIL., FAT. and ODALS. L., veiled and cloaked, carrying pumpkins, melons, jars and flowers. They

(a cupboard) the box.

enter calmly. They stop surprised. They remove their veils. ZIL. and FAT. tiptoe across to the divan: empty! What does this mean? and this disorder? They go and look out at the doors, timorously tiptoe, with outstretched arms. Ah ha! One of them has heard a noise in the box. Sh! They listen; a faint knocking is heard; almost dead. They tiptoe up to it; all lay ears to it. They start back. ZIL. crouches on the divan. The ODALS. get behind each other, as each finds herself in front she runs round behind. FAT. is brave; she stands by the box; she upbraids them for their cowardice. She unlocks it and throws the lid back. A pause. She dives grotesquely down and brings up a leg. She beckons. Curiosity wins. All tiptoe across to box; they stand peering down into it; they look at each other and back in the box. All together they dive in and bring up SHEM., collapsed. They bring him down; they give him wine. He recovers; looks round in alarm for the SHEIKH; points wildly to the bed, flings hands to head in fear and despair and tries to fly C. They run after him and bring him down again; he peers about in alarm. Come, tell us what has happened? What is the meaning of this disorder? He peers about. Impatient, they shake him. Tell us what has happened? What is the meaning of this disorder? Give me more wine! I will tell you. They give it him. I was out there; I looked up; I saw you wave the red cloth. No, no! Wave it at the window up there. No, no! I crept in there, I looked about, - no-one! I saw a figure on the divan; I thought, Oh bliss! I knelt... here; I said, Oh Zillah! A face turned round; oh horror! WOMEN: Oh horror! Him? Himself! He leaped out: I faced him like a lion; I smote my breast; I defied him. He was mad with rage; he seized me and threw me in the box. We are lost! We are lost! ZIL. faints in arms of ODALS. FAT: You d - - d fool! You blue-nosed, lily-livered etc.! Behold your handiwork! Now go! She strides at him; he retreats. She sends him out C. with a portentous kick.

3

25.

16. ODALS. restore ZIL. ZIL. in despair: Oh Fatima, what is to be done? Let us think. She thinks. ODALS. tidy the room. FAT: Eureka, I have it. What is it? What is it? They huddle round her; FAT. C. She murmurs a long discourse; there is a donkey in it; they titter; they clap their hands. ZIL: Oh blessed Fatima! you have saved my life. Go, let us hasten. ODALS. run

16. Fatima runs out & returns in a few moments with Abu Nâsi.

out C. and bring on ABU-NASI. They caress him and kiss him. They take off his bells; they put on a garland of flowers. FAT. talks grotesquely with him, giving him instructions, etc.; the DONKEY answers. They put him in the box.

Now we must all go out again. They veil themselves. FAT. claps hands: Put all the cushions in disorder again; overthrow the tables; pick up your marketings. They form Indian file, to go out L. FAT. peers out: Oh Lord, the Master! They fly confusedly out C. 1/26

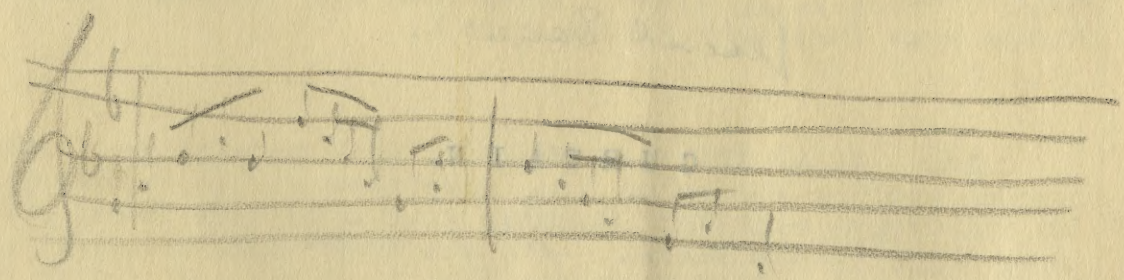
17. Trumpet blasts proclaim the approach of a great man. Enter MAMS. L. and stand each side of door. Enter '45 SHEIKH backwards ushering in solemn procession of PASHA, very dignified, followed by LIEUTENANT and two tall ferocious EXECUTIONERS. They take place. SHEIKH briefly describes what happened; ending: I lifted him lightly over my head and flung him down with a crash into box. (Stomach-ache still recurs.) He shall be duly punished. Where is your wife? SHEIKH claps hands for MEF. MAMS. clear up mess. SHEIKH claps again for MEF. MEF. appears in gallery R. and comes unwillingly, quaking with fear of devil; makes wide circle to avoid box. SHEIKH: Here is the Pasha. MEF. salaams (four movements), keeping eye on box. Where is my wife? MEF. goes L.: Behold! SHEIKH folds arms furiously facing door L.

18. Enter ZIL. and WOMEN L. with marketings. ZIL. begins softly, cooing at him, surprised at his recovery; he interrupts angrily: Behold, your sins have found you out; here is the Pasha. All the WOMEN make movement of raising dust. SHEIKH seizes ZIL. by wrist and throws her on her knees before the PASHA. He accuses her; she protests her innocence. You have a lover! Oh shame, horror, the idea of such a thing! She rises, protesting; she faints in arms of ODALS. FAT. gesticulates grotesque denial. ZIL. recovers. The contents of the box will convict you. PASHA bids box be brought forward; MAMS. drag it C. Very tragical music. EXECUTIONERS draw scimitars and bare their arms. SHEIKH: Now you shall be convicted! MAMS. lift lid. SHEIKH opens doors. DONKEY appears. A pause of consternation. All look at others with startled faces.

Quick agitated sensations. PASHA ~~very stern, with folded arms, threatens HUSBAND~~ ironical; WOMEN ~~reproach him~~ also; ~~he~~ Sheikh is bewildered; he becomes apologetic. He turns from one to another blindly, defending his conduct; he turns by mistake to MEF., who laughs in his face; SHEIKH kicks him; MEF. runs out by gallery. PASHA ~~threatens SHEIKH and~~ goes out ~~pompously~~ with ATTENDANTS L. MAMS. exeunt by gallery.

19. SHEIKH stares after PASHA, crestfallen. ODALS. caress DONKEY. ZIL. ~~stands~~ R.C. ~~weeping~~. ~~FAT., furious, reviles the SHEIKH for tormenting his WIFE. He explains his bewilderment: My brain reels; it is some horrible mistake. I saw a lover and suddenly it is a donkey! FAT: And a pretty d - - d fool you have made of yourself; look at your poor wife!~~ Zillah! No response. He kneels. Zillah! She gives him her hand. ~~FAT: I will show you what happened. Here you lay asleep, with a stomach-ache, it flew to your head; you awoke and saw a donkey. The ODALS. show the DONKEY; FAT. imitates him, mistaking it for a LOVER. The SHEIKH laughs heartily. ZIL. leads him to divan. He squats, laughing.~~ ZIL: How is your stomach-ache? Gone! I could eat. ZIL: claps: Bring that fruit. They bring tables and set them by divan; they bring fruit. FAT. dances a burlesque Nautch dance. MEF. comes down and spreads the red cloth over the table.

Exeunt to Divan

General Dance

C U R T A I N.